Organic Farming

3650. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the kind of encouragement given to the research and spread of knowledge with regard to organic farming;

(b) whether incentives are given to those farmers who have taken up organic farming as a mission; and

(c) the role of agriculture universities in encouraging organic farming?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) In order to standardize technology package for Organic Farming of important crops, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research has launched a network research programme at 13 centres of All India Coordinated Research Project on Cropping System Research with a financial allocation of Rs. 2.83 crores during Xth Plan. The Council is also imparting training, organizing workshops and field demonstrations to spread knowledge on organic farming in the country.

(b) During Tenth Plan, a National Project on Organic Farming has been initiated under which financial assistance is given to agencies for imparting training (@Rs. 13,000/-per course for a batch of 20 farmers), organizing field demonstrations on organic inputs (@Rs. 10,000/- per demonstration) and providing technology knowhow/advice (@Rs. 200/- per farmer/year).

(c) Organic farming has been including in course curricula of agricultural universities. Besides, universities are undertaking research, training and extension activities to promote organic farming.

Popularising local seeds among farmers of Vidarbha

3651. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the cotton farmers of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra are committing suicides because of unsuitable cotton seeds which are imported;

(b) whether there is any-attempt made to give preference to the local seeds; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) The requisite information is being obtained from the State Government of Maharashtra and shall be laid on the Table of the House.

(b) and (c) Ensuring good quality seeds to farmers is the primary responsibility of the respective State Government, as agriculture is a 'State Subject'. However, the Government of India supplement the efforts of States by organizing Zonal Seeds Review Meetings and also National Conferences on agriculture prior to each sowing season, i.e. Kharif and Rabi. The State which have experienced difficulties in meeting the requirement of seeds to be made available to the farmers are being advised to make advance tie up arrangement with surplus States/State Seed Corporations/Nationals Seed Corporation/State Farms Corporation of India.

Throwing of Onions and Tomatoes by Farmers

3652. SHRI JESSUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there are no takers for tomatoes and onions, particularly in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra; if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether it has been brought to his notice that at many places in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka at Mysore, Kolar, Bangalore, etc., the farmers are throwing away tomatoes on the roads;

(c) if so, whether Government would take this matter seriously to provide support price and marketing facilities to these hapless farmers; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA):(a) No such information has been received.

(b) During the months of March-April 2006, due to heavy arrivals in the market the prices of tomatoes declined and led to distress sale by the farmers.